



QUALITY RATING SYSTEM FOR ADULT LEARNING PROVIDERS



International Conference

International View on Quality in Adult Education

Prague, Czech Republic,
April 15, 2024

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CONFERENCE SUMMARY

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QUALTRACK International Conference: Redefining Quality in Adult Education

Prague, April 15, 2024 – The QUALTRACK International Conference, held in Prague, brought together experts, policymakers, and practitioners from across Europe to discuss the critical importance of quality assurance in adult education. The event, developed through a collaborative effort of partners from five countries with the support of the Erasmus+ program, showcased the innovative QUALTRACK framework and its potential to transform the landscape of adult learning.

Keynote speakers from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, Greece, and Italy shared their insights and experiences on quality assurance systems and initiatives in their respective countries. Jitka Chrtková, advisor to the Czech Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, emphasized the crucial role of professional education in adapting to the rapidly changing labor market. Monika Měšťanová, Head of Adult Education Unit at the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, highlighted the government's commitment to enhancing lifelong learning opportunities and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

Ildikó Pathóová, Head of Adult Education Unit at the Slovak Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth, provided an overview of the proposed legislation on adult education in Slovakia, focusing on the Slovak Qualification Framework and the National System of Qualifications. Antonela Marjanušić from Croatia discussed the country's advancements in quality assurance and the introduction of a micro-credential system, while Iliana Spyridonos from Greece presented the extensive framework for quality assurance in adult education. Andrea Filippo Calabria from CEIPES, Italy, addressed the challenges faced by the Italian adult education system and proposed comprehensive strategies to enhance basic skills proficiency and align VET policies with other educational offerings.

Viola Pinzi, project manager at the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), explored the integration of quality assurance in adult learning and education through the RALEXILA project, emphasizing the critical role of quality assurance across educational sectors.

The conference also featured a detailed presentation of the QUALTRACK framework by Miroslav Parvonič from the Association of Adult Learning Institutions CR. The framework, designed to be accessible, practical, and focused on continuous improvement, provides a clear roadmap for institutions to demonstrate their commitment to excellence in adult education. The conference concluded with a panel discussion on lessons learned and future directions for quality assurance in adult education.

"The QUALTRACK International Conference has been a resounding success, bringing together experts from across Europe to share their knowledge and experiences in quality assurance for adult education," said Jana Brabcová, President of the Association of Adult Learning Institutions CR. "We believe that the QUALTRACK framework has the potential to revolutionize the way we approach quality in adult learning, ensuring that education remains relevant, effective, and accessible to all."

SCHEDULE OF CONFERENCE

An international view on quality in adult education

First part 10:00 - 12:00

- **Welcome**
Jana Brabcová, President, Association of Adult Learning Institutions CR
- **Quality Assurance in ALE
(and the perspective of the RALExILA project)**
Viola Pinzi, Head of Projects, EAEA - European Association for the Education of Adults
- **Quality in the field of professional education**
Jitka Chrtková, Ministerial Advisor, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
- **The need for quality in adult education in the Czech Republic**
Monika Měšťanová, Head of Adult Education Unit, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports ČR
- **Slovakia: Adult Education Act and Quality Assurance**
Ildiko Pathóová, Head of Adult Education Unit, Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth SR
- **Innovations in the Croatian Adult Education System:
Quality Assurance and Microcredentials**
Antonela Marjanušić, Project Manager, Dante - Adult Education Institution
- **Adult Education in Greece: Quality Assurance and Evaluation**
Iliana Spiridonos, Consultant, Asset Tec
- **Evaluation systems for adult education in Italy:
differences and similarities with the rest of Europe**
Andrea Filippo Calabria, Project Manager, CEIPES - International Centre for the Promotion of Education and Development

Lunch 12:00 - 12:45

Second part 12:45 - 15:00

- **QUALTRACK Framework**
Miroslav Parvonič, Project Manager, Association of Adult Learning Institutions CR
- **Assessment Procedure**
Klaudius Šilhár, President, Association of Adult Education Institutions SR
- **Evaluation Criteria**
Miroslav Parvonič, Project Manager, Association of Adult Learning Institutions CR
- **Lessons Learnt - Panel Discussion**
Andrea Filippo Calabria, Project Manager, CEIPES - International Centre for the Promotion of Education and Development

Presentations summary



Viola Pinzi, project manager at European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), explored the integration of quality assurance in adult learning and education (ALE) through the RALExILA project during her presentation. She discussed how national registries of ALE are essential in deploying individual learning accounts, aligning with broader European visions for lifelong learning and employability. Pinzi emphasized the critical role of quality assurance across educational sectors, highlighting the dual system of internal and external evaluations that ensure educational programs meet stringent quality standards. This approach is crucial for maintaining the relevance and effectiveness of adult education programs and adapting to the

changing demands of the labor market.

Jitka Chrtková, advisor to the minister of labor and social affairs, Czech Republic, outlined the essential role of professional education in addressing the rapid changes in the labor market due to digitalization, robotics, and AI. With the Czech Republic having the lowest unemployment rate within the EU at 3.9% as of March 2024, she highlighted the need for significant structural changes anticipated by 2030 that could affect over one million jobs. Chrtková detailed the measures being taken to adapt to these challenges, including the doubling of employment opportunities facilitated by the Office of Labor of the Czech Republic, a 50% increase in requalification courses, and the implementation of an innovative digital platform,



www.jsemvkurzu.cz, to facilitate access to retraining and educational courses. This platform is part of a larger initiative funded to support over 100,000 individuals, ensuring that the workforce is equipped with necessary skills for future market needs. Chrtková emphasized that investing in high-quality professional education is fundamental for the future success of individuals and society as a whole.



Monika Měšťanová, Head of the Adult Education Unit at the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, delivered a compelling presentation on the importance of quality in education. She emphasized the government's commitment to enhancing lifelong learning opportunities and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Měšťanová highlighted the significance of quality assurance in both vocational education and training and other forms of adult education. She also addressed the crucial role of higher education institutions in promoting quality and discussed the Ministry's efforts to create a unified approach to quality assurance

across various educational sectors. This includes the development of a comprehensive framework encompassing internal and external quality assurance processes and the promotion of collaboration between higher education institutions and adult education providers.

Ildikó Pathóová, Head of Adult Education Unit, Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth, Slovakia, provided a detailed overview of the proposed legislation on adult education in Slovakia. Her presentation aimed at enhancing the quality of education through a comprehensive framework that includes the Slovak Qualification Framework and the National System of Qualifications. This framework is designed to recognize and certify the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired through formal, non-formal, and informal learning. Pathóová highlighted the importance of micro-credentials and the systematic process for verifying educational outcomes, which includes rigorous certification of educational institutions and accreditation of educational programs.



In Croatia, **Antonela Marjanušić**, from the Adult Education Institution Dante discussed significant advancements in quality assurance and the introduction of a micro-credential system. This initiative is part of a broader effort to align Croatia's adult education framework with both national and European standards for lifelong learning and employability. The presentation covered the Croatian legal framework for quality assurance in adult education, emphasizing a system that supports lifelong learning and skill acquisition, particularly focusing on digital and green skills essential for the modern labor market. The voucher system, which facilitates access to education by subsidizing costs through public funds, was highlighted as a key feature in promoting accessible education.

Iliana Spyridonos from Asset Tec, Greece, provided an insightful look into the systems and structures set up to ensure quality and effectiveness in adult education across Greece. The presentation focused on the extensive framework established by various governmental bodies, which includes detailed processes for the accreditation of private providers of adult non-formal education. Spiridonos discussed the professional qualification standard for trainers overseen by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP). The quality assurance model encompasses both self-evaluation and external evaluations conducted by the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education, focusing on multiple quality indicators



such as the employment outcomes of trainees and the overall satisfaction of both trainees and employers with the educational programs.



The presentation delivered by **Andrea Filippo Calabria** from CEIPES on Italy's adult education system highlighted the country's challenges with literacy and numeracy proficiency among adults and proposed comprehensive strategies to address these issues. It discussed structural and cultural factors that impact adult education outcomes and outlined strategic responses within the national Education and Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems. These strategies include enhancing the focus on basic skills, aligning VET policies with other educational offerings, and fostering a "culture of assessment" within the education system to integrate both national and international learning evaluations. The 'Youth Guarantee' plan was discussed as a significant part of the strategy

to re-engage NEETs by enhancing their skills and integrating them into the labor market.

Miroslav Parvonič from the Association of Adult Learning Institutions CR, Czech Republic, discussed the importance of quality assessment for providers of adult education, highlighting the economic and social benefits of adult education, such as higher productivity, innovation, better social status, and reduced unemployment. He emphasized the dire consequences of poor-quality education, which include wasted resources, demotivation, inadequate skills, and reduced competitiveness in the global market. Parvonič introduced the QUALTRACK model which is a comprehensive approach to evaluating adult education providers through a combination of self-evaluation and external assessment. This model assesses several areas, including institutional background, teaching teams, educational processes, and customer service, ensuring that providers meet high standards across all facets of service delivery. This initiative aims to foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement, making quality education accessible and beneficial to adults seeking to enhance their job prospects or personal development. Parvonič's presentation underscored the project's commitment to excellence and the belief that certification is a journey, not just an endpoint, within the adult education sector.





Klaudius Šilhár, president of Association of Adult Education Institutions SR, Slovakia, presented on the development and implementation of the QUALTRACK system for assessing the quality of adult education providers. He detailed the methodology creation process, influenced by European models such as the Swiss EduQua, the German Learner Oriented Quality Development (LQW), and the ISO 9001 standards, among others. The QUALTRACK approach integrates self-evaluation and external assessments to ensure comprehensive quality assurance. Šilhár outlined the evaluation procedures, including webinars for potential evaluators and the institutions being assessed, along with self-assessment questionnaires that facilitate initial quality checks. The system also involves trained evaluators who conduct in-depth reviews. This rigorous process aims to uphold high standards in adult education across various learning environments and to align with the European frameworks for lifelong learning and individual learning accounts.

At the conference's conclusion, a **panel discussion** featured representatives from partner organizations, engaging the audience with insightful dialogue about the Qualtrack project. They discussed the project's importance, highlighting regional perspectives: the Czech representative emphasized the importance of quality awareness rather than certification itself, while the Italian noted inefficiencies in local quality systems, stressing the need for improvements like Qualtrack. The Croatian representative added that although Croatia has recently started to enhance quality assurance for adult education, much progress is needed.



The panel also discussed outreach strategies to adult education institutions, with the Czech approach leveraging association networks for wider engagement, and Italy selecting partners through existing contacts, often on a national basis. The selection of evaluators was based on prior professional experience in the Czech Republic, with plans to formalize this process moving forward.

Feedback on the Qualtrack project underlined its complexity and the learning curve for both assessors and institutions. The discussion concluded with reflections on the project's future impact on policy and practice in adult education. There was consensus that while systemic change is ambitious, Qualtrack lays foundational steps towards significant enhancements in quality assurance across adult education sectors, aligning particularly well with Croatian efforts to establish rigorous evaluation and quality standards.



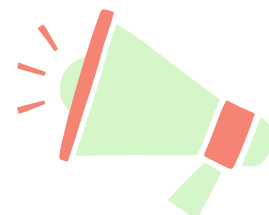
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